

United Nations



Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + UNHCR says 250,000 Rwandese refugees have fled to Tanzania in past 24 hours as ethnic violence intensifies; 50,000 wait at border to join unprecedented exodus.
- + Secretary-General to leave New York tomorrow for official visit to Norway; will also visit Geneva and Johannesburg, where he will attend inauguration of new South African President.
- + Secretary-General expresses concern at deadlock in efforts to restore democracy, and at human rights situation, in Haiti; will report to General Assembly on question shortly.
- + UNPROFOR says situation in Gorazde is stable despite sporadic small-arms fire on outskirts of town; massive humanitarian relief effort underway in Sarajevo.
- + UNICEF Executive Board authorizes three-year extension, and \$10 million in supplementary funding, for International Child Development Centre.
- + United Nations Information Centres to observe World Press Freedom Day on 3 May.

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More than 250,000 refugees have fled from Rwanda to Tanzania in the past 24 hours because of the worsening violence in their country, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR said that the exodus was the largest and fastest it had ever seen, and that a further 50,000 refugees were still waiting to cross a bridge on the Rwandese side of the border.

The UNHCR reported that police and militiamen had fired on some 5,000 people attempting to escape from a sports stadium in the southern Rwandese

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town of Cyangugu, killing an unknown number. The agency described conditions in the stadium as appalling, and said that 40 or 50 educated Tutsis were being executed there each night in an "intellectual ethnic-cleansing campaign."

Meanwhile in Kigali, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) has been protecting a number of sites where civilians have taken shelter. The military situation in the city has turned against the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), according to a United Nations spokesman, and further bloodshed is feared. The UNAMIR Force Commander and the Secretary-General's Special Envoy have been continuing their efforts to negotiate a cease-fire.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will leave Headquarters tomorrow for an official visit to Norway, according to a United Nations spokesman. He noted that that country was the largest contributor, on a per capita basis, to the activities of the Organization. The Secretary-General will meet with the Norwegian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and will also be received in audience by the King and Queen.

The Secretary-General will leave Oslo for Geneva, where, on 4 May, he will convene an advisory panel of eminent persons on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. The members of the group have been invited in their personal capacity to discuss the goals and objectives of the 1995 anniversary commemorations. He will also chair a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal on East Timor on 6 May.

The Secretary-General will then travel to Johannesburg to attend the inauguration of the new President of South Africa on 10 May, the spokesman continued. He said the Secretary-General did not, as a matter of policy, attend inaugurations of Heads of State or Government. However, he had accepted South Africa's invitation because of the United Nations role in the fight against apartheid and the country's first democratic elections, and given the special significance of the event.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed concern at the continuing deadlock in efforts to restore democracy in Haiti, and at the human rights situation there, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General, who will shortly report to the General Assembly on the question of Haiti, reiterated it was essential that democracy be restored as the result of an agreement by the Haitian parties.

The Secretary-General yesterday asked Special Representative Dante Caputo to continue to analyze the situation in Haiti closely and to report back to him soon, the spokesman added.

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The situation in the Bosnian safe area of Gorazde was stable today, despite sporadic small-arms fire on the outskirts of the town, according to a United Nations spokesman. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) presence there was being reinforced, with the deployment of extra companies of British and Ukrainian peace-keepers, and mines were being cleared from around the town's water plant.

A large number of civilians in Gorazde are suffering from infection and malnutrition, and some 300 casualties have been medically evacuated to date, the spokesman said. He noted that a 14-truck food convoy was en route to the safe area. Meanwhile in Sarajevo, a massive humanitarian relief effort was underway. The city's airport yesterday handled 21 flights organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and two by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), while 31 convoys were carrying food aid by road.

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board yesterday authorized a three-year extension for the International Child Development Centre, and allocated almost \$10 million in supplementary funding for the institution. Italy, the host country, has pledged more than \$6 million for core activities; the remainder will be sought from other donors for specific activities.

The Centre, which was established in 1988, promotes policy analysis and applied research on child development. It also provides a forum for international professional exchange, and disseminates research findings.

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United Nations Information Centres across the globe will observe World Press Freedom Day on 3 May. The Day was established by the General Assembly last year in response to the 1991 Windhoek Declaration, which stated that "an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development."

World Press Freedom Day will highlight the need for press freedom at a time when journalists, editors and publishers in many countries are subjected to harassment, imprisonment and official censorship. The Committee on Information will commemorate the Day with a meeting on 9 May.

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